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Of the personal sketches in the volume the principal are those of Baron Mercier and Count Montholon, both eminently praised ; of Seward, an optimist, but able and patriotic ; of President Lincoln, about whose fitness for his office the writer leaves us in some doubt ; of General Scott, whose commanding figure and noble service are set over against some personal vanity ; of McClellan and McDowell, of whom the last seems to be preferred by this Frenchman ; of Beauregard and Johnston, their courteous address and military genius ; of General Cass and his son, whose artistic taste and love for things foreign this visitor cannot fail to appreciate ; of Mr. Agassiz, Mr. Everett, and Mr. Sumner, all of them mentioned respectfully ; and of some scientific and practical men, whom the party met in their voyage upon the Lakes. The man who seems, with all his defects of management and temper, with all his patronage of foreigners and assumption of dignity, most to fasten the admiration of our Frenchman, for his intellectual, executive, and moral power, is General Frémont.

A singular feature in this book is, that the Preface by its date assumes to be written before the book, and tells of a work to come, and not of a work completed.

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3. — *Des Causes du Rire.* Par LÉON DUMONT. Paris : Auguste Durand. 1862. 8vo. pp. iv. and 133.

Not a few solid philosophical works have already given fame to the publishing house of Durand ; and no one of them has higher merit than the essay on the "Causes of Laughter." Of the author we know nothing beyond this book, and we are inclined, from internal evidence, to think that this is his first important work. It is, nevertheless, the work of a thorough scholar, of a clear and vigorous writer, and of a most acute and original thinker. Though writing about Laughter, M. Dumont never forgets that his purpose is scientific, and that he has undertaken to instruct, not to amuse. There are no humorous turns in the style, no flashes of wit, no marks of that brilliancy which we expect in the books of young French writers. The elements, conditions, and phenomena of Laughter are discussed with a most steady and exemplary gravity. It is really a dissection and history of what the author calls the *Risible*. Fine sayings are numerous enough, but none of them are *bon mots* ; and there is nothing to indicate the capacity of the writer as a humorist.

The first of the eight chapters treats of the difference between the external and internal laugh, shows how one may exist without the other, explains the distinction between laughing and smiling, and gives the

reason why man is the only laughing animal. Other animals have the organs necessary for laughter; but man alone has a soul which can know what is ridiculous. The second chapter is a concise summary and criticism of the theories of the *Risible*, ancient and modern. M. Dumont is not satisfied with any of these, and proceeds in the next four chapters to propound, illustrate, and urge a theory of his own, which seems to him comprehensive enough to cover all the ground, and accurate enough to meet the most exacting scrutiny. Stated in a single sentence, his definition of the *Risible*, — of that which makes the soul laugh, — is “anything of which the mind finds itself forced at once to affirm and deny the same thing”; in other words, whatever determines the intellect to form at the same time two contradictory relations. This theory M. Dumont regards as explaining all kinds of laughter except those which are merely physical and spasmodic. The longest and the most interesting chapter in the volume is the seventh, which treats of the synonymes of the *Risible*, and its various divisions and classes. The eighth and last chapter treats of the *Risible* in art, and of the difference between the *Risible* and the merely comic. The author maintains that there can be no such thing as comic music, — that music must become unmusical in order to be ridiculous. The book closes by some excellent remarks upon the moral value of laughter, with severe censure of frivolity and buffoonery. M. Dumont has no patience with a mere trifler, — with a man who has no higher business in the world than to excite mirth.

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4. — *Der Grundgedanke des Buches Hiob.* Von L. CHR. F. W. SEINECKE, Archidiaconus zu Clausthal. Clausthal: Grossesche Buchhandlung. 1863. 8vo. pp. 72.

ALL the books of the Old Testament have been made the subject of numerous critical experiments; but on none of them has such a variety of conjecture been fastened as on Job. The modern treatises on this marvellous poem, as to which scholars are not yet agreed whether it is ethical, sceptical, or mystical, — how much is fancy and how much fact, — would make of themselves a considerable library. To read all that has been written about this book, from the day of Hillel down to our time, is beyond the power even of the most industrious and rapid book worm. Equally impossible would it seem to say anything new on a theme on which all combinations are exhausted. Yet the good Archdeacon of Clausthal, in the course of his quiet studies, thinks that he sees new light for this ancient puzzle, and that he has a satisfactory theory of the origin and meaning of what has so long vexed the critics.